

Attack of the Flying Wurm

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Scott Wills

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I have to start this week's column with a little announcement. This will be the last Limited Information column I'll be writing. **Magic** these days is simply not as high a priority for me as it was when I started the column. Since my first column way back in February of 2004 I've switched jobs to a job that is far busier, and requires much more of my attention. I've also gotten married and while my wife is as considerate and undemanding as any wife could be, I still nevertheless want to spend lots of non-**Magic** related time with her. I'm also now in the final stages of our emigration to Canada (where my wife's family live).

In short, I just don't have the same number of free hours in a week any more to both write the column and play enough **Magic** to be at least fairly competent at it. I can only really do one or the other and there's no way on earth I want to see the quality of the articles decline significantly. With that in mind, I think you, the readers, deserve someone with more time to commit, and who may also bring an entirely fresh perspective on things.

There's an archive of eighty or so articles that I'm leaving behind covering many different topics from mulligans to team-sealed, and from signalling to card evaluation. I'm proud of those, and many of the articles I've written should hopefully stand the test of time and still be useful in the future.

You'll still have something new to read next week. Our esteemed editor has asked Matt Vienneau to fill in to the end of the year and Matt has already written some great limited articles for the site so I hope you all look forward to that.

With that out of the way I still have today's final column to give you. The draft walk-throughs are always popular and that seemed to me a good way to finish things off, so let's crack open the first *Ravnica* pack.

Pack one

Pack 1, Pick 1: Barbarian Riftcutter, Greater Mossdog, Courier Hawk, Dimir House Guard, Fists of Ironwood, Necromantic Thirst, Goblin Fire Fiend, Perplex, Selesnya Signet, Snapping Drake, Golgari Signet, Voyager Staff, Perilous Forays, Divebomber Griffin, Gleancrawler.



My Pick:

Gleancrawler

Not a lot of choice for the opening pack here. Gleancrawler is very nice, but largely because he's a 6/6 Trampler for six mana. The ability is sometimes relevant but it often won't do anything. It's easily the best card in the pack and makes a nice start to the draft. It's worth noting that it isn't required to be a Golgari card. It can be played in both Dimir and Selesnya decks; it's just harder to cast there.

Pack 1, Pick 2: Guardian of Vitu-Ghazi, Boros Garrison, Tattered Drake, Ordrun Commando, Golgari Rotwurm, Tidewater Minion, Rain of Embers, Dryad's Caress, Dromad Purebred, Sell-Sword Brute, Elves of Deep Shadow, Twisted Justice, Vindictive Mob, Blockbuster.

My Pick:

Golgari Rotwurm

Not the most powerful of packs here but the best card in the pack happens to be in the colour of my first pick and there's no reason not to take it. Golgari Rotwurm gets taken from this pack.

Pack 1, Pick 3: Convolute, Golgari Rot Farm, Dogpile, Stinkweed Imp, Sparkmage Apprentice, Leave No Trace, Drake Familiar, Shred Memory, Conclave Equenaut, Golgari Signet, Undercity Shade, Frenzied Goblin, Rolling Spoil.

My Pick:

Stinkweed Imp

This pick should please those who thought I undervalued old Stinky last week. This time around the first two picks have definitely shaped my colour preference and I don't want to move out of my colours when there isn't a need to. Stinkweed Imp makes a fine addition to the deck and also makes sure I'm passing no good black cards to the player on my left.

Pack 1, Pick 4: Mortipede, Torpid Moloch, Terrarion, Scatter the Seeds, Benevolent Ancestor, Surveilling Sprite, Dizzy Spell, Thoughtpicker Witch, Seismic Spike, Elves of Deep Shadow, Ethereal Usher, Sunhome, Fortress of the Legion.

My Pick:

Elves of Deep Shadow

The choice here is quite close between Scatter the Seeds and Elves of Deep Shadow. Mortipede ranks way below those two. Scatter is obviously preferable when you're Selesnya but in Golgari I prefer the Elves this early in the draft. Golgari tends to be more about powerful individual cards rather than hordes of Saprolings, and the Elves help you get those cards into play faster.

Pack 1, Pick 5: Farseek, Woodwraith Stangler, Induce Paranoia, Ordrun Commando, Zephyr Spirit, Boros Recruit, Smash, Transluminant, Clutch of the Undercity, Voyager Staff, Pariah's Shield.

My Pick:

Farseek

Not a lot to get excited about here. Pariah's Shield isn't good in Golgari Decks and is another very expensive card that just loses you a guy each turn normally. In Selesnya it's better as you can just drop it on a Saproling each turn and prevent all combat damage. It's still not great then though as a

removal spell or even something as simple as first-strike damage can negate it. Farseek is a much better pick as it provides both acceleration and assistance for any potential Dimir or Selesnya splashes.

Pack 1, Pick 6: Stasis Cell, Roofstalker Wight, War-Torch Goblin, Boros Fury Shield, Surveilling Sprite, Dromad Purebred, Grayscaled Gharial, Sell-Sword Brute, Wojek Apothecary, Golgari Germination.

My Pick:

Roofstalker Wight

Once again, a pretty poor selection overall. There are some average Boros cards left over but nothing I'd want to take. The Wight is a two-drop and will probably make the deck and is a better option than the Golgari Germination, which I can't ever remember playing in my main deck yet.

Pack 1, Pick 7: Wojek Siren, Convolute, Dimir Aqueduct, Incite Hysteria, Conclave's Blessing, Quickchange, Selesnya Signet, Svogthos, the Restless Tomb, Seed Spark.

My Pick:

Svogthos, the Restless Tomb

A slightly late Signet here but with the Farseek and Elves already drafted I don't feel an urgent need to take it. I'm happier to take Svogthos at this point as it can provide a decent body in the late game, especially after the Stinkweed Imp has been Dredged back once or twice.

Pack 1, Pick 8: Votary of the Conclave, Vedalken Dismissal, Clinging Darkness, Necromantic Thirst, Perplex, Dryad's Caress, Boros Signet, Sins of the Past.

My Pick:

Clinging Darkness

For those of you who don't think Clinging Darkness goes around late here again is an eighth pick removal spell. For some reason players just don't value this card particularly highly right now. I like it a lot as it's a nice cheap answer to a lot of smaller threats as well as turning the bigger ones into irrelevant 0/3 walls.

Pack 1, Pick 9: Barbarian Riftcutter, Necromantic Thirst, Goblin Fire Fiend, Perplex, Selesnya Signet, Voyager Staff, Perilous Forays.

My Pick:

Selesnya Signet

Another late Signet and this is one I'm happy to pick up.

Late Picks: Ordrun Commando, Shred Memory, Surveilling Sprite, Boros Recruit, Sell-Sword Brute, Wojek Siren.

No late pick gifts this week although Shred Memory might be playable if there are a lot of things I might want to Transmute into.

After pack one the playable cards amount to:

- 1CC: Elves of Deep Shadow
- 2CC: Roofstalker Wight, Clinging Darkness, Farseek, Selesnya Signet
- 3CC: Stinkweed Imp
- 4CC:
- 5CC: Golgari Rotwurm
- 6+CC: Gleancrawler
- Lands: Svogthos, the Restless Tomb

Not the worst of starts certainly. There's an easy option here for splashing a white card or two so I certainly will be looking out for anything from that colour I might want to play.

Pack two

Pack 2, Pick 1: Gaze of the Gorgon, Goblin Spelunkers, Greater Mossdog, Sadistic Augermage, Scatter the Seeds, Lurking Informant, Sewerdreg, Smash, Veteran Armorer, Dimir Signet, Brainspoil, Darkblast, Stoneshaker Shaman, Root-Kin Ally, Eye of the Storm.



My Pick:

Brainspoil

There are lots of playable cards to choose from here; perhaps up to ten of these cards could make the main deck. That's very nice though as it means I'm very likely to get something playable when this pack comes back around the table to me. Gaze of the Gorgon, Brainspoil and Darkblast are the best cards in the back. I'd really like to have a Darkblast in this deck as it's a very cheap removal spell and the Dredge ability would be welcomed in this deck with Stinkweed and Svogthos already. However, Brainspoil is just a little better and can take out almost any threat my opponent might throw at me. It's slow and clunky but it does the job and it can Transmute into the Rotwurm when I need a creature more than I need to remove one.

Pack 2, Pick 2: Strands of Undeath, Barbarian Riftcutter, Terrarion, Gather Courage, Sparkmage Apprentice, Nightguard Patrol, Rally the Righteous, Dromad Purebred, Grayscaled Gharial, Fiery Conclusion, Siege Wurm, Dimir Machinations, Instill Furor, Cyclopean Snare.

My Pick:

Siege Wurm

Another solid pick for the deck here in Siege Wurm. Gather Courage is nice but 5/5 monsters are the bread and butter of this sort of deck. Even though this deck won't be able to make the most of the Convoke ability the Wurm will still likely hit play for five mana, which is fine.

Pack 2, Pick 3: Wojek Siren, Terraformer, Consult the Necrosages, Gather Courage, Boros Fury Shield, Vedalken Dismissal, Elvish Skysweeper, Conclave's Blessing, Dimir Infiltrator, Shambling Shell, Transluminant, Belltower Sphinx, Clutch of the Undercity.

My Pick:

Shambling Shell

Shambling Shell further enhances the Dredge engine as well as simply being one of the best cards in the archetype in general. There's nothing else here I'd even consider and am very happy to have the great three-drop to add to my cardpool.

Pack 2, Pick 4: Roofstalker Wight, Torpid Moloch, Sadistic Augermage, Thundersong Trumpeter, Dimir Infiltrator, Grayscaled Gharial, Shred Memory, Votary of the Conclave, Flight of Fancy, Junktroller, Overwhelm, Oathsworn Giant.

My Pick:

Overwhelm

A slightly close choice between Roofstalker Wight and Overwhelm here. I already have a Signet, Wight and Farseek so am prepared to let the two-drop go by in favour of the expensive sorcery. Overwhelm has been good for me in the past and can really swing an otherwise unwinnable game in your favour. Once again it may not make the cut in this deck simply because I don't have the Saprolings for it at this point but if some Fists of Ironwood or Scatter the Seeds show up then this will be a definite inclusion.

Pack 2, Pick 5: Convolute, Dimir Aqueduct, Goblin Spelunkers, Muddle the Mixture, Sadistic Augermage, Goblin Fire Fiend, Sundering Vitae, Leave No Trace, Conclave Equenaut, Compulsive Research, Conclave Phalanx.

My Pick:

Sundering Vitae

A really horrible selection for my fifth pick. The Equenaut is the best card but I don't really want to splash for double-white cards. I also don't really want to splash for 2/4 guys with nothing but a life-gain ability. I finally decide on the Sundering Vitae over the Dimir Aqueduct. I really want some sort of Naturalize effect between deck and sideboard and playing Vitae main isn't the worst plan anyway. It can have a nasty effect when you suddenly dispose of a Faith's Fetters mid-combat for example. As it might make the main deck I take it now to make sure I have one.

Pack 2, Pick 6: Farseek, Boros Garrison, Incite Hysteria, Surge of Zeal, Sundering Vitae, Veteran Armorer, Flight of Fancy, Boros Guildmage, Pollenbright Wings, Copy Enchantment.

My Pick:

Pollenbright Wings

From a pack with nothing to a pack with a couple of great cards. The two Boros two-drops are going surprisingly late and suggest that Boros is a little under-drafted in this draft. For me however, the obvious choice here is Pollenbright Wings. This is another card that I'm a big fan of and this type of deck is the best deck to put it in. It's a mid-to-late game card that gives me time to draw the white mana required, and I'll hopefully be able to drop it on a Wurm and ride that home.

I really like the Wings in this deck and am a little surprised to see it this late. It seems to be a card that is undervalued by the general *Magic Online* populace right now.

Pack 2, Pick 7: Coalhauler Swine, Dimir Aqueduct, Ordrun Commando, Nightguard Patrol, Muddle the Mixture Infectious Host, Rain of Embers, Stone-Seeder Hierophant, Fiery Conclusion.

My Pick:

Nightguard Patrol

Another pack full of nothing. I take the Nightguard Patrol just in case I get forced into heavier white but I don't plan on doing that if I can avoid it.

Pack 2, Pick 8: Coalhauler Swine, Sparkmage Apprentice, Nightguard Patrol, Vedalken Dismissal, Zephyr Spirit, Boros Recruit, Smash, Transluminant.

My Pick:

Transluminant

With a white splash very likely the Transluminant gets a lot better. I'd draft it anyway, and probably play it even without the splash, but having that option makes me very happy with it as an eighth pick.

Pack 2, Pick 9: Gaze of the Gorgon, Goblin Spelunkers, Sadistic Augermage, Lurking Informant, Smash, Dimir Signet, Stoneshaker Shaman.

My Pick:

Gaze of the Gorgon

The opening pack makes it around the table and somehow the Gaze is still in there. I'm not one to look a gift horse in the mouth though and I happily add that to my card pool as it'll certainly make the main-deck.

Late Picks: Rally The Righteous, Vedalken Dismissal, Shred Memory, Dimir Aqueduct, Incite Hysteria, Coalhauler Swine.

The Aqueduct is the only late-pick that I'd play here but with one Roofstalker Wight in the deck I'll likely include it over a Swamp.

The cards that might get played now amount to:

1CC: Elves of Deep Shadow

2CC: Roofstalker Wight, Clinging Darkness, Farseek, Selesnya Signet, Transluminant

3CC: Stinkweed Imp, Shambling Shell, Sundering Vitae

4CC: Gaze of the Gorgon

5CC: Golgari Rotwurm, Brainspoil

6+CC: Gleancrawler, Siege Wurm, Pollenbright Wings, Overwhelm
Lands: Svogthos, the Restless Tomb, Dimir Aqueduct

Once again, it's solid, but certainly not amazing. I'd like to pick up a few more solid creatures along with another removal spell or two. That seems like a reasonable goal for the third pack.

Pack three

Pack 3, Pick 1: Civic Wayfinder, Votary of the Conclave, Terraformer, Fists of Ironwood, Centaur Safeguard, Tidewater Minion, Surge of Zeal, Golgari Brownscale, Gate Hound, Boros Signet, Selesnya Signet, Watchwolf, Lightning Helix, Pollenbright Wings, Excruciator.



My Pick:

Pollenbright Wings

I debate a little while over Civic Wayfinder vs. Pollenbright Wings but I eventually go with the powerful enchantment. I'm not keen on having so many expensive spells but I can always cut the weakest ones and the deck has a reasonable amount of mana acceleration at this point anyway. Plus, I simply think that Pollenbright Wings is very powerful and is one of those cards that just wins games.

Pack 3, Pick 2: Golgari Rot Farm, Consult the Necrosages, Tattered Drake, Vedalken Entrancer, Thundersong Trumpeter, Lurking Informant, Sewerdreg, Smash, Selesnya Signet, Snapping Drake, Dimir Signet, Seed Spark, Cyclopean Snare, Breath of Fury.

My Pick:

Selesnya Signet

Not what I was hoping for from my second pick at all. The Signet is something I'm happy to have in the deck but I didn't want to have to use my second pick on it. It will be an automatic inclusion in the deck however, so I guess I shouldn't be that disappointed by it.

Pack 3, Pick 3: Swamp (Foil), Wojek Siren, Incite Hysteria, Centaur Safeguard, Screeching Griffin, Caregiver, Drake Familiar, Thoughtpicker Witch, Sell-Sword Brute, Elves of Deep Shadow, Vindictive Mob, Blockbuster, Reroute.

My Pick:

Elves of Deep Shadow

Not the best if third picks either but the Elves are playable and are another automatic inclusion in the main deck. This style of deck does like its mana acceleration and having two Elves gives me a chance of making a second turn Shambling Shell.

Pack 3, Pick 4: Terrarion, Votary of the Conclave, Drift of Phantasms, Thundersong Trumpeter, Gather Courage, Goblin Fire Fiend, Sundering Vitae, Leave No Trace, Faith's Fetters, Compulsive Research, Last Gasp, Dark Heart of the Wood.

My Pick:

Last Gasp

I dread to think what was originally in this pack to make Faith's Fetters, Drift of Phantasms and what is arguably the best common in the set make it around to me. Last Gasp is exactly what I was looking for and I'm very happy to see it after the cards the last two packs provided.

Pack 3, Pick 5: Stasis Cell, Guardian of Vitu-Ghazi, Viashino Slasher, War-Torch Goblin, Skyknight Legionnaire, Vedalken Entrancer, Gate Hound, Zephyr Spirit, Lurking Informant, Seeds of Strength, Remand.

My Pick:

Seeds of Strength

This is late to see Vedalken Entrancer and Skyknight Legionnaire but neither of those cards are useful for me. The Guardian isn't something I really want to play simply because I don't anticipate having a lot of guys in play to cast it. Seeds of Strength is therefore my choice as it is a card that I might want to play to help fill out the deck.

Pack 3, Pick 6: Mortipede, Dogpile, Selesnya Sanctuary, Sabertooth Alley Cat, Dizzy Spell, Infectious Host, Rally the Righteous, Compulsive Research, Reroute, Nullmage Shepherd.

My Pick:

Nullmage Shepherd

It's very close between Mortipede and Nullmage Shepherd but I prefer my four drops to be able to hold off opposing two-drops rather than trade with them. The Shepherd also means I feel better about not having to main-deck Sundering Vitae. I've used the Shepherd's ability frequently in previous drafts and sometimes it's useful just to take out opposing Signets and put a dent in an opponent's mana supply.

Pack 3, Pick 7: Goblin Spelunkers, Woodwraith Strangler, Muddle the Mixture, Seismic Spike, Stone-Seeder Hierophant, Fiery Conclusion, Cyclopean Snare, Instill Furor, Molten Sentry.

My Pick:

Woodwraith Strangler

I take the Strangler simply because I'm a little concerned about the number of playable cards I might have. I never want to include the Strangler but if the cards just aren't there he may be forced into the main-deck.

Pack 3, Pick 8: Woodwraith Stangler, Strands of Undeath, Elvish Skysweeper, Boros Recruit, Quickchange, Peel from Reality, Glass Golem, Light of Sanction.

My Pick:

Strands of Undeath

Elvish Skysweeper is playable but I already have a few removal spells along with a Stinkweed Imp so it's not essential here. I also don't have the Saprolings to throw at the opposing flyers. I therefore go with Strands of Undeath over it as that's a fine addition to the deck and can be very unfair when dropped onto a Siege Wurm.

Pack 3, Pick 9: Votary of the Conclave, Terraformer, Centaur Safeguard, Surge of Zeal, Gate Hound, Selesnya Signet, Excruciator.

My Pick:

Centaur Safeguard

With two Selesnya Signets already drafted I really need the creature over the third one. Centaur Safeguard is fine in this deck and will help increase the creature count as I already know it's going to be low.

Late Picks: Golgari Rot Farm, Reroute, Terrarion, Viashino Slasher, Dogpile, Seismic Spike.

A late Rot Farm is nice as is the Terrarion. I anticipate that both of those will make it into the main deck.

Putting all of the picks together gives the following selection:

1CC: Elves of Deep Shadow x 2, Terrarion
2CC: Roofstalker Wight, Transluminant, Clinging Darkness, Last Gasp, Seeds of Strength, Farseek, Selesnya Signet x 2
3CC: Stinkweed Imp, Shambling Shell, Centaur Safeguard, Sundering Vitae
4CC: Nullmage Shepherd, Strands of Undeath, Gaze of the Gorgon
5CC: Golgari Rotwurm, Brainspoil
6+CC: Gleancrawler, Siege Wurm, Pollenbright Wings x 2, Overwhelm
Lands: Svogthos, the Restless Tomb, Dimir Aqueduct, Golgari Rot Farm

The deck

This draft there aren't the high number of playables I had the luxury of last week, and that will make deck-building easier in some respects. Whereas last week was all about cutting playable cards this week it's about deciding on the final cards that will be included.

I already know I'm running 16 lands as I have five mana accelerators that I'm certain to play. So that leaves room for 24 spells in total. My initial pass through the cards gives me the following inclusions:

1CC: Elves of Deep Shadow x 2, Terrarion
2CC: Roofstalker Wight, Transluminant, Clinging Darkness, Last Gasp, Farseek, Selesnya Signet x 2
3CC: Stinkweed Imp, Shambling Shell, Centaur Safeguard
4CC: Nullmage Shepherd, Strands of Undeath, Gaze of the Gorgon

5CC: Golgari Rotwurm, Brainspoil

6+CC: Gleancrawler, Siege Wurm, Pollenbright Wings x 2

All of those are pretty obvious inclusions I think. That's 22 spells in total so only two more are need. There really aren't a lot of options for this deck and looking through the remaining cards gives only the following choices: Overwhelm, Seeds of Strength, Shred Memory x 2, Sundering Vitae.

I already have two late game cards in the two Pollenbright Wings, and I also have a fairly low creature count. Both of these count against Overwhelm. It's possible to look at the deck and assume that the Wings can make Saprolings which can then Overwhelm the opponent. The problem there is that if I have a Pollenbright Wings'd creature hitting the opponent I'm not likely to need the Overwhelm. It'll just be a "win more" card. There'll be other times when I'm stuck on four mana and have both Wings and Overwhelm in hand and that's the sort of situation I want to avoid. The Overwhelm gets cut.

With the Nullmage Shepherd main I feel that I can relegate the Sundering Vitae to the sideboard and therefore do just that.

I haven't enough cards to Transmute two copies of Shred Memory into useful things but one is fine as it can go and fetch either Last Gasp or Clinging Darkness. One Shred Memory and the Seeds of Strength are the final two cards to make the deck. This gives a final decklist of:



Limited Information



Main Deck

40 cards

1 Dimir Aqueduct	1 Centaur Safeguard	1 Brainspoil
6 Forest	2 Elves of Deep Shadow	1 Clinging Darkness
1 Golgari Rot Farm	1 Gleancrawler	1 Farseek
2 Plains	1 Golgari Rotwurm	1 Gaze of the Gorgon
1 Svogthos, the Restless Tomb	1 Nullmage Shepherd	1 Last Gasp
5 Swamp	1 Roofstalker Wight	2 Pollenbright Wings
16 lands	1 Shambling Shell	1 Seeds of Strength
	1 Siege Wurm	2 Selesnya Signet
	1 Stinkweed Imp	1 Shred Memory
	1 Transluminant	1 Strands of Undeath
	11 creatures	1 Terrarion
		13 other spells

It's light on creatures but I'm not sure there's too much I could've done about that. It does have a decent number of powerful cards in there along with some discard, some removal and some late game bombs. It's not a bad draft deck at all; it's just a little on the shaky side.

Time to find out how it played out.

Round 1

I curved out nicely in game one with Roofstalker Wight, Stinkweed Imp and Nullmage Shepherd. An Infectious Host (not a card I'd recommend playing by the way) held the Wight back but the other two attacked into the Host while my opponent developed his board with just an Elves of Deep Shadow.

A fifth turn Siege Wurm from my opponent blocked my Nullmage Shepherd when I attacked with all of my guys on the subsequent turn. I had a choice of either Gaze of the Gorgon or Last Gasp to take the Wurm down but Gaze is clearly the correct play there. A Last Gasp could be met by a Convoked Gather Courage, which would be very, very bad news! Gaze on the other hand definitely saves my creature and definitely kills the Wurm and also allows me to keep back the cheaper removal spell.

A Centaur Safeguard joins my opponent's board and I'm happy to just swing with old Stinky for a turn while dropping a Terrarion.

My opponent Scatters some Seeds at the end of my turn and follows up in his with a Rootkin Ally.

I sacrifice the Terrarion on my next turn to allow the Wight to fly over for two. While holding Last Gasp and Seeds of Strength, I leave the Shepherd back along with the Stinkweed Imp, which I plan to throw in front of the Rootkin Ally.

My opponent's next turn is a good one – play land number seven and tap them all for Overwhelm! With the Host, the Elf, the Safeguard, three Saprolings and the Ally in play I'm looking close to dead, but I'm able to Last Gasp the Centaur Safeguard in response to prevent some damage (another fine reason to hold it back over the Gaze – instant creature kill is much better when that kill doesn't require blocking). The Stinkweed Imp blocks the Rootkin Ally, and my Nullmage Shepherd blocks the now 4/4 Host and takes it down with the help of Seeds of Strength. I still take 16 damage from the four unblocked creatures and then another two when the Host dies and suddenly my life total is just one tenth of what it was!

I dredge back Stinky and sit on my three guys against my opponent's four men hoping he doesn't rip the Gather Courage I feared earlier. He swings with all three Saprolings and I block three, trading one for the Wight, and drop to just one life.

My opponent just draws a land while I pull my Transluminant which gives me three guys (four including Svogthos, the Restless Tomb which sits in play to chump block if necessary) to his lone Saproling and I start attacking with two men each turn. I'm very aware that I need to end the game quickly before he draws something. I make a great rip on my next turn though and pull Pollenbright Wings, which I can drop on the Nullmage Shepherd to create two more blockers. My opponent draws nothing relevant over his next two turns and with Stinky, the Transluminant and an ever-growing horde of Saprolings there's just no way for him to force through the last point of damage he needs. Game one is mine.

Game two



Game two starts off with Transluminant for me that my opponent trades for a Gather Courage when he drops a Fists of Ironwood on it and blocks with one of the resulting Saprolings. Farseek and Elves of Deep Shadow accelerate me over the next few turns and I drop Stinkweed Imp again followed by a fifth turn Gleancrawler.

My opponent scares me a little with Scatter the Seeds and a second Fists of Ironwood and I start to get worried about the Overwhelm again. He chooses to block Gleancrawler with all eight of his men though, perhaps fearing a Gather Courage but I show him the Gaze of the Gorgon that I had in my opening hand and that's the end of the game really. The blocking decision was quite bad, as he'd seen the Gaze in game one and he would've been better waiting a turn or two to see if he drew a removal spell before making such a risky block. With all his men dead, it doesn't take many turns for Gleancrawler to finish things off.

Round 2

My round two opponent is playing Dimir. I win the flip this game and start with Farseek, Centaur Safeguard and can safely tap out for a fourth turn Golgari Rotwurm without fear of being Convoluted when my opponent only has a Compulsive Research on his third turn.

A fourth turn Vedalken Entrancer makes my opponent's intentions clear but I drop the Pollenbright Wings on my Rotwurm and sail over for a ton of damage and a lot more guys. He now also can't use Brainspoil as an out if he has it and Dismissal would be too slow so I'm feeling confident about this game already.

My opponent makes a Belltower Sphinx which can chump for one turn but my own Brainspoil doesn't even give him that luxury. The Saprolings and Rotwurm swing in and drop him to just three while facing 11 creatures. An easy first game, made even easier due to winning the coin flip.



Game two

My first few turns in game two are all about accelerating my mana with Farseek on turn two and both Signets on turn three while my opponent shores up his defenses with a Drift of Phantasms. Although I have both Golgari Rotwurm and Gleancrawler in hand that I could potentially play, I just drop a Centaur Safeguard on turn four as I want to play around Convolute and Induce Paranoia.

My opponent drops his Belltower Sphinx again on his fifth turn and I make my Gleancrawler to see if he has the Brainspoil that he'll most likely need. He taps five but drops Followed Footsteps on the Gleancrawler, giving him a potential infinite supply of 6/6s!

The cards I have give me a suitable answer though. I attack with the Gleancrawler next turn and my opponent chumps with the Drift of Phantasms. This is probably correct as he wants to keep his life total pretty high so he can get a couple of Gleancrawlers in play before having to deal with mine. I drop the Golgari Rotwurm after combat and keep a black mana back for the end of my turn. At the end of my turn I simply put the Gleancrawler's ability on the stack and then sacrifice it to the Rotwurm before resolving the ability. The Gleancrawler only checks what creatures get brought back when its ability resolves so doing this makes the Gleancrawler's ability bring itself back to my hand! No more Followed Footsteps to worry about now and my opponent has one less blocker as well.

My opponent makes his Vedalken Entrancer again but has nothing to deal with the Rotwurm, never mind the Gleancrawler, and game two ends pretty soon in my favour.

Round 3

Both myself and my Boros opponent drop Signets on our second turns. My Centaur Safeguard is trumped by his Nightguard Patrol on turn three. My Signet allows a fourth turn Rotwurm while he makes an Ordruun Commando, probably looking for the trade. I drop Strands of Undeath on the Rotwurm ending any chances of that trade and taking two spells from his hand.

A Skyknight Legionnaire arrives and along with the Patrol lets him hit me for four. The race is on.

The Rotwurm takes another quarter of my opponent's life total the following turn and Stinkweed Imp makes an appearance to hold off the Legionnaire. The Patrol can keep swinging and does so dropping me to 14 and is followed by a Thundersong Trumpeter that threatens to hold off the Rotwurm.

My opponent blocks the Rotwurm on my next attack with the Commando and I'm forced to regenerate. I'm still sitting on just five mana at this point and can't use the Brainspoil in my hand as a result. Instead I just make my Terrarion, hoping to draw into a land via the cantrip effect next turn.

I draw the land naturally and am able to Brainspoil the Trumpeter in my next turn. My opponent also draws his sixth land that allows him to drop something a lot more threatening.



The first-strike of the Angel combined with the Nightguard Patrol holds off the Rotwurm and I just develop with my Shambling Shell. An Oathsworn Giant then allows the Angel to attack into the Stinkweed Imp and I need to find a way through very soon so I formulate a quick plan to allow me to do that.

During my next upkeep I sacrifice the Shambling Shell to make the Rotwurm a 6/5, and then I draw the Shell via Dredge and play it again. I sacrifice it a second time to make the Rotwurm a 7/6. I then blow the Terrarion and use the card draw from that to Dredge and play the Shambling Shell for a third time. I can now freely attack with the Rotwurm as the Shell can be sacrificed again to make the Rotwurm an 8/7, which would be tough enough to get past all the first-strike damage.

My opponent chumps with the Patrol and I in turn chump the Angel with my Stinkweed Imp to avoid going too low and losing to a Boros Fury-Shield.

Over the next couple of turns I chump with Stinkweed Imp while my opponent eventually runs out of blockers and the Rotwurm only has to hit once to allow a couple of sacrifices to drain the last few points away.

Game two

My opponent starts game two with a Boros Guildmage and Nightguard Patrol. A Signet allows me to drop a third turn Nullmage Shepherd but my opponent has a neat play. He makes his Thundersong Trumpeter and then gives it haste with the Guildmage so he can tap it to prevent the Advocate from blocking.

I have to take out the Trumpeter with my Brainspoil on my fourth turn but my opponent is still on the attack as a fresh Skyknight Legionnaire sails over the top of the Shepherd.

At this point I'm down to just 12 life already and have no answers to the Legionnaire so need to start racing quickly. I tap the Advocate and all my lands during my next turn to drop a Siege Wurm and just hope my opponent doesn't have anything that allows him to attack into it.

The Siege Wurm starts to race but a Viashino Fangtail from my opponent threatens to end the race before it's even really begun. I stall the ground with a Transluminant and drop my Shambling Shell into play in the hopes it might suck a point of damage from the Fangtail. My opponent doesn't bite though and the next Legionnaire attack drops me to eight.

I actually have one of those rare experiences where something relevant jumps to the top of my deck as one of the two Pollenbright Wings makes an appearance. I obviously drop this onto the Siege Wurm and it sails freely over any potential chump blockers, dropping my opponent to 10 and creating some useful blockers.

The Fangtail drops me to seven and the subsequent Legionnaire attack takes me to just five. Any burn spell would win it for my opponent at this point in time so I can't afford to give him an additional turn and also need to block the Legionnaire if I can.

On my next turn I attack with the Wurm, all the Saprolings, and the Transluminant. My plan is to sacrifice the Transluminant and hope my opponent doesn't kill the Shambling Shell with his Fangtail. If he doesn't then the Shambling Shell will protect the Spirit Token and I can then chump the Legionnaire during my opponent's next turn. If I were to just randomly sacrifice the Transluminant during my main phase my opponent will likely wonder why. However, by attacking with it along with the Saprolings I lose all my men but the sacrifice of the Transluminant won't be so obvious and the Saprolings will be replaced anyway. The Wurm deals five and creates replacement Saprolings while all but one Saproling dies to his blockers and the Transluminant gets sacrificed when it dies too.

This tactic pays off, as my opponent doesn't realise he should probably kill the Shambling Shell. My end of turn rolls around and the Spirit token enters play. My opponent pauses for a second but aims the Fangtail at the Spirit token anyway. The Shell gets sacrificed to keep the Spirit token alive and my opponent suddenly gains nothing by attacking with the Legionnaire. This means cards like Rally the Righteous no longer kill me and my opponent still has the Wurm to deal with.



On only four life I Dredge back the Shambling Shell and attack with everything once more. With the Spirit token, the six Saprolings and the Trampling Wurm my opponent just doesn't have enough to block with and I manage to take a very close second game.

Wrapping up

It's clear from the above games that Pollenbright Wings was the standout card in the deck, but all sorts of cards had their effect on the matches at various stages. Strands of Undeath and Shambling Shell were both key in winning the first game of round three for example. Stinkweed Imp also did some great work although there was a game or two where it would've been much better as something that was better at attacking.

Gleancrawler was also obviously ridiculous but mostly just because it's a six mana 6/6 Trampler. The ability was relevant in one game but I think I could've still won that game without it.

This deck didn't draw that much removal but seemed to do okay without it. There were very few games where I drew more than one removal spell. The slightly low creature count was improved as the two Dredge guys meant I could draw more creatures if I needed to.

The mana in this deck was just about perfect I think. With six ways to get white mana I was never missing it and the two Signets along with the Farseek gave the deck a good chance at getting an early mana boost. You can see in the above games just how important the acceleration is in this deck. With the large quantity in the deck I was regularly able to get down fifth turn Gleancrawlers and fourth turn Rotwurms.

So long, and thanks for all the fish

On that note I bid you all farewell. I've very much enjoyed my time writing this column and I hope you've enjoyed reading it too. While I am sorry to be leaving I do think it's the right choice now.

All the best, and see you at the draft tables.

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